

LIFE Scholarship

2006-07 Academic Year

What is the LIFE Scholarship?

The Legislative Incentive for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship program administered by the financial aid office at each eligible public and independent institution in South Carolina. The LIFE Scholarship may be used towards the cost-of-attendance for up to eight terms based on the students' initial college enrollment date. Student's must be enrolled in their first one-year program, first associate's degree, first two-year program leading to a baccalaureate degree, first baccalaureate degree, or first professional degree.

The Purpose:

- Increase ACCESS to higher education
- Improve EMPLOYABILITY of South Carolina students
- Provide INCENTIVES for students to be better prepared for college
- Encourage students to GRADUATE from college on time

Award Amount:

Eligible Institutions	Award Amount*
Four-year Public	Up to the cost-of-attendance, not to exceed \$4,700, plus a \$300 book allowance
Four-year Independent	Up to \$4,700 plus a \$300 book allowance
Two-year Public and Independent	Up to the cost-of-tuition at USC Regional campuses plus a \$300 book allowance
Technical	Up to the cost-of-tuition plus a \$300 book allowance

**Award amounts are awarded half in the fall and half in the spring. Cost-of-tuition shall mean the award amount charged for registering for credit hours of instruction and mandatory fees assessed to all students. (The LIFE Scholarship in combination with all other scholarships and grants shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV regulations for any academic year.)*

To qualify for a LIFE Scholarship, a student must meet ALL of the following requirements in addition to the initial eligibility requirements, if you are a first-time entering freshman, listed on page two of this handout.

General Eligibility Requirements:

- Graduate from high school or complete a home school program as prescribed by law;
- Attend an eligible South Carolina public or private college or university;
- Be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of college enrollment;
- Be a U.S. citizen or a legal permanent resident (who meets the definition of a eligible non-citizen according to State Residency Statutes);
- Be enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student;
- Certify that he or she has never been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor convictions within the past academic year;
- Verify that he or she is not in default and does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid;
- Must not be a SC HOPE Scholarship, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or Lottery Tuition Assistance recipient.

****Please be aware that the information provided in this handout is subject to change during the Legislative Session. The Commission staff will update this information as necessary.*



Initial Eligibility Requirements:

In order to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship, first-time entering freshman attending an eligible four-year institution must meet two of three of the following criteria:

1. **Earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA) based on the SC Uniform Grading Scale upon high school graduation**
 - a. The grade point average must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The GPR must be calculated after official completion of courses required for graduation.
2. **Score an 1100 on the SAT or an equivalent 24 on the ACT**
 - a. SAT/ACT scores will be accepted through the June national test administration of the high school graduation year.
 - b. It is permissible to select the highest SAT Critical Reading score (formerly known as SAT Verbal) combined with the highest SAT Math score from different test administrations. Students cannot use the SAT Writing subsection score to meet the minimum 1100 SAT requirement.
 - c. The ACT composite score must be at one test sitting.
3. **Rank in the top 30% of the graduating class**
 - a. The ranking percentages must be reported in two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The class rank must be based on the SC Uniform Grading Scale.
 - b. The rank must be based on all students who received their diploma during the traditional graduation ceremony typically in May/June. The graduating class cannot include any students who graduated during the summer.

First-time entering freshmen attending an eligible two-year or technical institution must earn a cumulative 3.0 GPA based on the UGS as described in (1a) above. The standardized test score and class rank requirements are waived.

To Regain or Earn the LIFE Scholarship:

After completion of the first academic year of college or to earn the scholarship while in college, students must:

- Meet all general eligibility criteria;
- Earn an average of 30 credit hours by the end of each academic year (fall, spring, summer) equaling a minimum of 30 credit hours consistent with the policies and procedures of the institution if a rising second year student, 60 credit hours if a rising third year student consistent with the policies and procedures of the institution, or 90 credit hours consistent with the policies and procedures of the institution if a rising fourth year student; and
- **NEW** Earn a minimum 3.0 LIFE grade point average (GPA) based on grades earned at ALL institutions attended excluding remedial, continuing education, and non-degree credit courses by the end of each academic year (fall, spring, summer). Please note that the new LIFE GPA does include any college grades earned while in high school.

If You Plan to Transfer, Read This!

- Students who receive the LIFE Scholarship and transfer mid-year to another institution may be eligible to receive the scholarship for the spring term if they met the eligibility requirements at the end of the previous academic year.
- If you are a freshman, mid-year transferring student, transferring to the same type of institution two-year to two-year or four-year to four-year the same requirements apply (eligibility at time of enrollment).
- If you are a freshman transferring mid-year from a two-year to a four-year institution then you must meet the eligibility requirements of a first time entering freshman enrolling at a four year institution.

**If transferring to another eligible institution, to receive the LIFE Scholarship
INITIALLY, students must:**

- Have earned a cumulative 3.0 LIFE GPA at eligible institutions; and
- Have earned a minimum of 30 credit hours (second year transfer), 60 credit hours (third year transfer), or 90 credit hours (fourth year transfer) at all prior institutions or an annual equivalent for a student who begins mid-year at the participating institution.

For scholarship eligibility after the initial year of transfer, students must:

- Earn a cumulative 3.0 LIFE GPA based on grades earned at all eligible institutions attended excluding remedial, continuing education, and non-degree credit courses by the end of the academic year (fall, spring, summer); and
- Meet one of the following:
 - Earn 30 credit hours if entering the second year of college based on initial enrollment; or
 - Earn 60 credit hours if entering the third year of college based on initial enrollment; or
 - Earn 90 credit hours if entering the fourth year of college based on initial enrollment; or
 - Earn 120 credit hours if entering the fifth year of an approved five-year bachelor's degree program based on initial enrollment.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for the LIFE Scholarship?

There is no application for the LIFE Scholarship. The college or university will automatically determine eligibility and will notify students if eligible for the LIFE Scholarship. If you believe that you are eligible, but have not received notification from the institution, please contact the financial aid office at the college or university for additional information.

How will the new SAT effect the LIFE Scholarship requirements?

The SAT requirement for the LIFE Scholarship will remain at 1100. Only the math and critical reading sections will be taken into consideration for the Scholarship.

How long can I receive the LIFE Scholarship?

The LIFE Scholarship is limited to ten (10) consecutive terms for the first approved five-year baccalaureate degree program, eight (8) consecutive terms for the first four-year degree program, four (4) consecutive terms for the first associate's degree program or a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward a baccalaureate degree or two (2) consecutive terms for the first one-year certificate or diploma program. The available number of terms for scholarship funding is based on the time of initial college enrollment. For example, if a student enrolls in college in Fall 2006, the last term of eligibility to receive the LIFE Scholarship will be Spring 2010.

Can I qualify for the LIFE Scholarship if I graduated from a high school out-of-state or completed an approved home school program as prescribed by law?

Yes, as long as you can provide verification to the college that you were a dependent of a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of college enrollment and you met all other eligibility criteria. In order to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship, the GPA and class rank requirements must be based on the UGS. Therefore, as a high school senior enrolled in an approved home school program or an out-of-state high school, you must request to have your grade point average and rank reported on the UGS. If you are home schooled, this information must be provided by the approved home school association. If you are attending an out-of-state high school, then the school must provide an official letter on the school's letterhead with the GPA according to the UGS. Class rank must be reported on the out-of-state school system.

May I receive the LIFE Scholarship if I am required to take remedial courses?

First-time entering freshmen attending an eligible two-year or technical college who enroll in remedial courses during the first term(s) of enrollment will not be eligible for scholarship funds during this period unless the student is enrolled in at least twelve credit hours of non-remedial courses. Credit hours earned during the term(s) of remedial enrollment will not be used to determine remaining scholarship eligibility at the completion of remediation unless the student has completed at least twelve hours of non-remedial coursework each term of

enrollment. The student will be eligible for the LIFE Scholarship for the term following completion of remediation if the student was eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship upon high school graduation.

What do I need to do to keep the LIFE Scholarship once it is awarded?

To keep the LIFE Scholarship, students must earn a cumulative 3.0 LIFE grade point average (GPA) and an average of 30 credit hours each academic year. In addition, any credit hours attempted or earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, or advanced placement credit accepted by the institution as academic credit, will be reflected in the total number of cumulative hours earned. Also, remember that the academic year is considered fall, spring and summer. Therefore, you can use the summer to bring up a GPA or earn credit hours.

How do I get the LIFE Scholarship to transfer institutions?

If you transfer institutions you will need to contact the financial aid office at the new institution concerning your eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship.

What happens if I fall below the minimum credit hour or GPA requirement?

Students who fail to earn a cumulative 3.0 LIFE GPA at the end of the academic year or the requisite number of hours required, may regain eligibility the next academic year if their cumulative LIFE GPA is a 3.0 at the end of the academic year and they have earned a minimum of 30 credit hours if a rising sophomore, 60 credit hours if a rising junior, or 90 credit hours if a rising senior. The academic year is considered fall, spring and summer. Therefore, you can use the summer to bring up a GPA or earn credit hours. Please consult your college or university financial aid office to verify that credit hours earned during the summer at another institution will be accepted.

What happens if an extenuating circumstance has caused me to fall below the required number of credit hours or grade point average?

If a truly extenuating circumstance resulted in the loss of LIFE Scholarship eligibility, you may submit an appeal to the Commission on Higher Education. Applications for appeal may be obtained after June 1 from the institution's Financial Aid Office, the Commission on Higher Education, or <http://www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/Appeals/AppealsHm.htm>. Applications are reviewed annually. The deadline for receipt of appeal applications for 2006-2007 is October 13th.

May I use credit hours earned through AP, CLEP or collegiate hours earned prior to high school graduation toward the credit hour requirement?

Any credit hours earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, or advanced placement credit hours do not count against the semester limits and may be used towards the credit hour requirement if accepted by the institution.

Can I use the LIFE Scholarship to study abroad, co-op, or go on an internship?

Yes, you can use the scholarship, but the home institution must approve the internship, cooperative work program, travel study program, or National or International Student Exchange program and accept full-time transfer credit hours. In addition, you must continue to meet eligibility requirements. Please see LIFE Regulation for further details.

What happens to my LIFE Scholarship if I get deployed with the military overseas?

The semesters you are deployed will not count against the maximum terms of eligibility for the LIFE Scholarship.

What happens if I drop out of school and re-start the next semester?

The LIFE Scholarship is a continuous program. Therefore, if you drop out or take a leave of absence from the institution, the "clock is still ticking" so to speak. You will still have to adhere to the yearly credit hour requirements just like you would if you were still in school.

If I need to drop a class one quarter or semester will I lose the LIFE Scholarship?

No, you will not automatically lose the scholarship. Scholarships are awarded to full-time students annually. However, you must meet the credit hour requirement by the end of the academic year to maintain eligibility. Therefore, you must have a total of 30 credit hours after your first year, a total of 60 credit hours after your second year, and a total of 90 credit hours after your third year of college. Any credit hours attempted or earned before high school graduation, hours exempted by examination, or advanced placement credit accepted by the institution as academic credit will be reflected in the total number of cumulative credit hours earned.

What happens if I have been convicted of an alcohol or other drug misdemeanor offense?

Students who have been adjudicated delinquent or have been convicted or pled guilty or *nolo contendere* to any alcohol or other drug-

related misdemeanor offense are ineligible for the scholarship for one academic year after the adjudication, conviction, or plea occurred. The student will lose eligibility the next academic year immediately following conviction and will lose the scholarship for the fall and spring terms.

May I qualify for the LIFE Scholarship if I complete my high school graduation requirements a semester early?

Students who complete their high school graduation requirements prior to the official graduation date reported on the final high school transcript may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship pending the approval of the Commission on Higher Education. An Early Graduation Application Form can be obtained from the Commission on Higher Education or <http://www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/LIFE/Early%20Graduation%20Form%202.doc>. The form must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education for consideration.

May I qualify for the LIFE Scholarship if I qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973?

Students who qualify under the ADA must register with the institution's Disability Services Office. The institutional Disability Services Provider must provide written documentation to the Office of Financial Aid each academic year verifying that the student is approved to be enrolled in less than full time status or earn less than the required annual credit hours. In order to renew the scholarship each academic year, the student must complete the required number of hours approved by the institutional Disability Services Provider and earn a cumulative 3.0 LIFE grade point average.

If I am a LIFE Scholarship Recipient, am I eligible to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance during the summer of the same academic year?

No, according to the law, if you received the LIFE Scholarship, you cannot receive Lottery Tuition Assistance during the same academic year. For example, if you are awarded the LIFE Scholarship during the fall and spring terms, then you are not eligible to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance during the summer term. However, if you transfer mid-year from an eligible four-year institution to an eligible two-year institution and you received the LIFE Scholarship at the four-year institution, you may be eligible to receive Lottery Tuition Assistance.

If I am enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies Program at one of the USC Regional Campuses can I receive the LIFE Scholarship for my 3rd and 4th years of study?

In order for you to receive the LIFE Scholarship your 3rd and 4th years of study you will need to transfer to USC Columbia.

For more information about the LIFE Scholarship Program, contact:

Tajuana Massie, Program Manager

tmassie@che.sc.gov

(803) 737-2271

Sandra Rhyne, Coordinator

srhyne@che.sc.gov

Phone: (803) 737-2280

Fax: (803) 737-3610

******Please be aware that the information provided in this handout is subject to change during the Legislative Session. The Commission staff will update this information as necessary.***